



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 28th February 2020

Subject: Barclay Review – Update

Author: Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1. Background

It was agreed that the Board should be updated at each meeting on developments and expenditure arising from the Barclay Review.

The Non- Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill, at the time of writing had passed the Stage 3 reading, and the final bill will be available shortly. It will be partially implemented in April 2020, with full implementation to follow thereafter.

There are six main Barclay recommendations which are reflected in this bill, these are listed below;

- i. The change of the revaluation cycle from 5 yearly to 3 yearly
- ii. New property markers to be shown against properties in the Valuation Roll
- iii. Changes to valuation of properties within a Park
- iv. From the 2022 Revaluation going forward access will be given to a list of comparative subjects used to value a particular entry in the Valuation Roll
- v. The existing Appeals system to be changed to a two-stage appeal system
- vi. Information Gathering powers to be strengthened with Assessors issuing Civil Penalties to those who do not respond.

The Scottish Assessor's Association (SAA) has had regular contact with the Scottish Government and has replied to consultations and appeared at committees as appropriate to ensure a consistent approach. Assessors will continue working jointly to ensure delivery of all these new duties and will also support ongoing development of the SAA Portal which provides information to ratepayers and their agents.

2. Recruitment

As previously reported one of the major impacts of this bill will be the necessity to recruit staff in order for the new powers and legislative changes to be implemented timeously.

The recruitment and retention of staff is now becoming a serious issue. Two very experienced staff left the organisation last year, they were from existing core staff, not staff recently employed to deal with Barclay. The filling of these two core vacancies has proved unsuccessful despite two attempts in July 2019 and again in January 2020. This highlights an underlying issue which has been noticed for some time however it is being exacerbated now due to the Barclay Review. In effect 14 Assessors are on a recruitment drive and there will inevitably be 'poaching' of staff between offices. Add to that the fact that I am currently attempting to bolster qualified staff numbers for Barclay delivery and the matter becomes more complex.

I am therefore seeking the Board's permission to review the current structure and report back to the May Board with my recommendations.

3. IT Valuation System

Work is still ongoing with other Assessors' offices in designing and procuring a new IT Valuation system. The timetable for delivery of this system is expected to be 9 months from now.

4. Internal Barclay Project Group

Given the changes to current working practices which will be required to deliver these recommendations an internal working group has been established. This group will now meet on a regular basis given that the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill will shortly be passed. Training and a plan for delivery of this new legislation will be a top priority over the coming months.

5. Recommendations

- i. The Board approves the Assessor reviewing the current staffing structure in order to address the recruitment issues.

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